



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2024-263, **Version:** 1

A resolution recognizing the 10th Anniversary of Nashville's Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter and the contributions of Metro Social Services and the Office of Homeless Services.

WHEREAS, Nashville's Cold Weather Plan recognizes November 1 through March 31 as the cold weather season in Nashville and Davidson County; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, Metro Social Services ("MSS") has operated the city's Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter annually, opening once temperatures drop dangerously low, providing overnight shelter for Nashville's unhoused population; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2014, an arctic front hit parts of the country, including the southeast with one to three inches of snow falling throughout the area and temperatures dropping as low as 5 degrees; and

WHEREAS, the winter system hovered over Nashville for days and, at that time, the Metropolitan Government did not have a coordinated shelter network beyond referring people to Room In the Inn and the Nashville Rescue Mission; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Karl Dean, recognizing those two facilities were not sufficient, reached out to MSS, requesting to open a temporary shelter to provide relief from the cold for Nashville's unhoused population; and

WHEREAS, as a result, Nashville's Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter was established on January 15, 2014, for the city to take additional people seeking shelter when Room In the Inn and the Nashville Rescue Mission began reaching capacity, hence the intentional reference of "overflow" in the shelter's name, and

WHEREAS, while Nashville residents who have housing were advised to stay home and off the roads due to hazardous winter conditions, those experiencing homelessness were directed to the Nashville Fairgrounds Vaughn building where MSS, in conjunction with the Office of Emergency Management ("OEM"), operated the city's Cold Weather Shelter; and

WHEREAS, due to the success of the shelter response, a more coordinated and firmer plan was constructed, eventually involving input, coordination, and support from homeless advocates, community partners, and fellow Metro agencies including Metro Nashville Police & OEM conducting cold patrols and providing rides to the shelters, and WeGo providing free bus passes to those unhoused needing transportation to the shelters, and

WHEREAS, in ten years, MSS has provided a safe haven, compassionate care, case management, warm beds, hot meals, and shelter for pets belonging to those experiencing homelessness for thousands of some of Davidson County's most vulnerable residents who face a significant threat from cold weather; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Office of Homeless Services ("OHA") was created to provide solutions and expertise in reducing homelessness in Nashville and Davidson County. OHA also assists in operation of the Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter; and

WHEREAS, bilingual staff is on site to provide translation services and staff receives annual training in mental health counseling, de-escalation response, CPR, administering Narcan, and more, and MSS also has certified

nursing assistant credential staff; and

WHEREAS, Renee' Pratt is currently the executive director of MSS, having served in that role since 2010; and

WHEREAS, MSS averages 32 employees who provide standard administration office duties during regular office hours, however, when the shelter opens, they must leave the office and switch hats to work the shelter overnight. This selfless act means they operate on little sleep, cannot see their families, and are unable to care for their own residential needs during severe weather; and

WHEREAS, so far, the Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter has opened 31 days for the 2023-2024 season, eight of which were open 24 hours consecutively January 14 through 22, 2024; and

WHEREAS, January 12 through 14, the Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter was opened for standard hours, 7pm through 7am, however, a winter blast moved in Sunday afternoon, on January 14, upon which, the shelter did not close on Monday morning, January 15; and

WHEREAS, the shelter shifted to 24-hour operation January 15 through 22., marking a ten day stretch of consecutive sheltering with the shelter attendance reaching 298 people overnight on January 15, and peaking at 422 people on January 18; and

WHEREAS, MSS and OHA staff operated the shelter by providing the following services: cleaning, meal preparation and service, case management, counseling, and life-saving measures as needed; and

WHEREAS, Nashville's Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter has served an important role in protecting Nashville's unhoused population for the past ten years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the 10th Anniversary of Nashville's Extreme Cold Weather Overflow Shelter, which provides overnight shelter for Nashville's unhoused population. The Metropolitan Council further recognizes the hard work and dedication of the Metro Social Services and Office of Homeless Services staff in keeping the Extreme Weather Overflow Shelter operational.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.